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PROGRESS OF THE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM
IN THE EAST CENTRAL STATES

A radio talk by W.G. Finn, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, broadcast Friday, June 19, 1936, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and associated stations.

I shall review briefly some of the more important phases of the program applying to the East Central Region. This Region includes the States of Delaware, Kentucky, North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

First let's see about the number of work sheets. Up to the present time, about 400,000 farmers have filed work sheets. Of course, these figures are not final. Work sheets are still coming in, and the present outlook is that at least 75 percent of the total farm land in the East Central Region will be covered by work sheets.

As you know, some areas of this Region have been severely affected by dry weather. To enable farmers to adjust their operations to the emergency caused by the drought, several modifications have been made in the program. In view of these modifications, other farmers are being given an opportunity to bring their farms into the program this year. Therefore, special arrangements have been made for county agents and local committees of farmers to help fill out work sheets next week, beginning June 22 and ending June 27.

Now a few words about the modifications in the program. One change relates to the minimum acreage of soil-conserving crops. Previously, if a farmer did not have a certain minimum acreage of conserving crops on his farm in 1936, a deduction was required from the total of his Class I and Class II payments. As you know, Class I payments are for diversion of acreage from soil-depleting crops to soil-conserving crops, and Class II payments are for carrying out specified soil-building practices.

Now, if a farmer falls short of this minimum acreage, deduction will be made only from his Class I payment. That is, the farmer will be paid for soil-building practices carried out, without being required to have any given percentage of his land in soil-conserving crops.

This change will be of special benefit to those farmers who expect to qualify only for Class II payments, particularly small producers and producers of truck and vegetable crops.

Another modification permits acreage from which soybeans are cut for hay in Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware to be classified this year as soil-conserving, if the beans are followed by a winter cover crop. In these States, acreage devoted to soybean hay formerly had been classified as soil-depleting.

This modification will enable farmers to substitute this emergency hay crop for the normal hay crops that failed because of drought, and still qualify for payments under the program. The planting of the cover crop

following the soybeans, will help keep the land from washing during the winter, and thus conserve the soil.

A third modification applies to land from which wheat is harvested and makes it possible for a farmer to count one-half of this acreage as soil-conserving, if a legume is grown with the wheat or immediately following it. Previously, the entire acreage from which wheat was harvested was considered as soil-depleting. This will be of interest to those producers who have not been able to seed soil-conserving crops this year on land other than the wheat acreage.

The special provision relating to small cotton farms which has just been announced for the Southern Region, will apply in the East Central Region. It permits a farmer whose cotton soil-depleting base is 5 acres or less, to receive payment for diverting up to 2 acres. Previously, payment could not be received for diverting more than 35 percent of the cotton base. This provision also will be of benefit to men in the drought areas.

There are several other provisions of the program that are of particular importance to small producers. One is that it permits growers to earn Class II or soil-building payments without diverting land from the production of soil-depleting crops. If a small farmer is unable to shift acreage from soil-depleting crops to soil-conserving crops and cannot qualify for Class I payments, he can still qualify for a Class II payment by carrying out soil-building practices on his farm. These practices in the East Central Region include seeding legumes, growing green manure crops, using lime or superphosphate, constructing terraces, and planting forest trees.

The program provides that the soil-building allowance for a farm shall be at least \$10. This means that any farm, regardless of how small, can qualify for a Class II payment of as much as \$10.

Before leaving the subject of soil-building practices, I want to say a few words about keeping records and preserving evidence of practices that are carried out. Since each farmer will be required to submit proof that any soil-building practices were carried out on his farm before he can qualify for payment, it is important that he keep all such evidence. This applies particularly to records showing the acreage of green manure crops and to the date turned under, and to records showing ground limestone or superphosphate purchased and applied.

You can easily see how hard it would be to check up on these practices at a later date if there is no record of them. In this connection, let me suggest that you farmers who are carrying out practices of this kind notify your local committeeman or county agent so that later he can help certify your performance.

I see that my time is about up, and in closing I want to say just a word about the objectives of the program. For one thing, it makes it possible for every farmer in the East Central Region to share in a plan to

conserve and improve his land, and to receive payments for doing so. It will help to correct serious overcropping of valuable farm lands, and aid in keeping production balanced with market demands.

The program enables producers to plant more of the crops they need for use on the farm--crops that build up or improve the fertility of the soil and keep it from washing-- and less of the crops that cause erosion and rob the soil of its richness.

